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**Second Chances**

WE ARE A SECOND CHANCE PELL SITE

#SECONDCHANCES



# PRESS KIT

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Featuring RCC President Melissa Singler and RCC Vice President Dr. Patrena Benton Elliott

LCI Warden Mary Locklear

Robeson County District Attorney Matt Scott and Robeson County Sheriff Burnis Wilkins



# ROBESON COMMUNITY COLLEGE SELECTED FOR SECOND CHANCE PELL EXPERIMENT

Robeson Community College is excited to announce that it was invited by the U.S. Department of Education to participate in the Second Chance Pell Experiment.

“This program is amazing and we are eager to build upon our relationship with the North Carolina Department of Corrections and the Department of Education,” said RCC President Melissa Singler. “We are so excited to participate in this program, as this initiative will be a game changer for many incarcerated individuals and their families.”

The Second Chance Pell Experiment was first established in 2015 by the Obama-Biden Administration to provide Pell Grants to incarcerated individuals, which allows them to participate in postsecondary education programs. The program has since been expanded under the Biden-Harris administration. To date, students have earned over 7,000 credentials through the initiative, building new skills and improving their odds of success.

“I was so elated to open my email and discover that our college had been invited to participate,” said Dr. Patrena Benton Elliott, Vice President for Instruction and Student Support Services. “I knew that the process is very competitive and although our proposal advanced to the second-round months ago, I couldn’t be certain of the outcome. It is truly an honor

that we were chosen and we are excited to see the initiative’s future impact and outcomes. Education is often the second chance that provides a gateway to social and economic mobility for justice impacted individuals, giving them the skills and training they need to re-enter society as a productive citizen.”

The announcement of the expansion of 73 sites means that Robeson Community College will be one of 200 colleges and universities nationwide selected to participate in the program. RCC was the only community college in North Carolina selected in this round.

“The NC Department of Public Safety is excited to learn that Robeson Community College has been chosen to participate in this Second Chance Pell Grant Experiment with the US Department of Education,” said DPS Secretary Eddie M. Buffaloe Jr. “Education leads to better job prospects, and when incarcerated individuals are given hope for a better life outside the prison system, study after study has shown it can break the cycle of criminal behavior, resulting in less repeat offenders and a safer community to live in that we can all enjoy.”

Robeson Community College currently partners with Lumberton Correctional Institute (LCI) to provide adult basic education and continuing education offerings.

“Access to high-quality postsecondary education is essential to incarcerated individuals, but for far too long, people in prison were left out,” said U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona. “The expansion of Second Chance Pell and these new pathways out of default are critical steps for incarcerated individuals to be able to access educational opportunities that will provide second chances to build a future.”

Providing education in prison is proven to reduce recidivism rates and is associated with higher employment rates. A recent study from the RAND Corporation, funded by the Department of Justice, found that incarcerated individuals who participated in correctional education were 48% less likely to return to prison within three years than incarcerated individuals who did not participate in any correctional education programs. RAND also estimated that for every dollar invested in correctional education programs, four to five dollars are saved on three-year re-incarceration costs.

“It is essential for any safe community to have individuals who are working and paying taxes and contributing to society,” said Robeson County District Attorney Matt Scott. “Education is a big part of that, and this program that RCC is taking part in is the best way to integrate individuals back into society and into productive citizens.”

“Robeson Community College prides itself in serving first-generation college students, including those from diverse, underrepresented and disenfranchised groups, as well as those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds,” stated Singler. “We look forward to what the future holds as we strive to make a difference in our community in helping our Second Chance Pell students gain valuable skills, earn credentials, and build a portfolio of knowledge to aid them with their transition.”

Why are second chances important?

According to the Charles Koch Institute, our criminal justice system should provide both accountability and redemption, which necessitates second chances for individuals with criminal records. It provides people with dignity and allows them to achieve their potential as contributing members of our community. Second chances can help an individual achieve closure from the past and from time served, providing them with the ability and support necessary to avoid future criminal behavior.

Warden Mary Locklear adds famous words from Nishan Panwar “Not everyone gets a second chance. If you do get one, take advantage of it because it’s a gift, and it may be something better than you had before.”

## A Second Chance at Education



Enacted in 2015, the "Second Chance" Pell Grant Pilot lifts the ban from inmates using federal Pell Grants to pay for college through selected colleges and universities.

### The History of Pell in Prisons

**1965**

Congress enacts Title IV of the Higher Education Act, allowing all prisoners to use federal Pell Grants to pay for college classes

**1982**

350 College-in-prison programs  
27,000 prison inmates enrolled in classes

**Early 1990s:**

772 College-in-prison programs,  
1,287 correctional facilities

**1992**

Amendment of Higher Education Act prohibits prisoners serving life without parole or death sentences from using Pell Grants

**1994**

Violent Crime Control & Law Enforcement Act bans all prisoners from receiving Pell aid

**1997**

Number of College-in-prison programs drops to 8.

**2015**

Obama Administration announces Second Chance Pell pilot, which allows inmates at selected federal and state prisons to receive federal Pell Grants

**2020**

The U.S. Education Department announced an expansion of Second Chance Pell to include 67 additional post-secondary institutions, doubling the size of the initiative to temporarily restore Pell funding to incarcerated students.

**2021**

Biden Administration Announces 3rd Expansion of Second Chance Experiment, inviting colleges and universities to submit applications for review and consideration.

**2022**

RCC receives notification that it was selected to participate in Second Chance Pell Experiment and becomes 1 of 73 schools chosen nationwide to participate in the 3rd expansion, bringing the total number of schools invited to 200.